

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a nonwoven fiber composite for the manufacture of filters in the tobacco industry, the method comprising:

feeding separated fiber materials to a fluidized bed;

introducing a transport air through the fluidized bed to transport the separated fiber material to a suction conveyor located above the fluidized bed where the transport air flows through the fluidized bed in the direction of the suction conveyor; and

compiling the fiber material on the suction conveyor to produce a nonwoven fiber composite wherein the fluidized bed comprises a curved portion to separate used transport air from the fiber material, in after which the separated fiber material is directed in an upward direction to the suction conveyor.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, further comprising providing fibers of different compositions.

Claim 4 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the fibers in the fluidized bed further comprises at least one additive.

Claim 5 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the separated fibers have a length of from about 2 to about 100mm.

Claim 6 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the average fiber diameter of the separated fibers is in the range of from about 10 to about 40 μ m.

Claim 7 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the average fiber diameter of the separated fibers is in the range of from about 20 to about 38 μ m.

Claim 8 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the separated fibers are synthetic fibers.

Claim 9 (Original): The method according to claim 8, wherein the fiber strength of the synthetic fibers is from about 1 to about 20 dtex.

Claim 10 (Original): The method according to claim 8, wherein the fiber strength of the synthetic fibers is from about 2 to about 6 dtex.

Claim 11 (Original): The method according to claim 1, further comprising successively feeding separated fiber materials of differing composition to the fluidized bed.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the feeding step further comprises the separating of fibers.

Claim 13 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises forming a continuous fiber filter rod from the compiled fibers, and dividing the

continuous rod into individual filter sections.

Claims 14-26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein the transport air of the introducing step initially moves the separated fiber material downward toward the curved fluidized bed, then the transport air moves the separated fiber material generally horizontal along the curved fluidized bed and finally the transport air moves above the separated fiber material as the separated fiber material moves along the curved fluidized bed upward toward the suction conveyor.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the sharpest curvature of the curved fluidized bed is at the end of the fluidized bed where the fluidized bed connects with the suction conveyor.